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Through the enlightened eye and I – am I bringing creativity and visual literacy into Higher Level Education?

An introduction to the Special Issue on Digital Creativity in the Workplace

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Summary

Eisner (1993) explained the need to extend the forms of representation in our understandings of educational research. This special issue of EJOLTS is intended to contribute to the knowledge-base generating a new understanding of the educational influences of educators who are using ICT in e-learning and values-based self-study to enhance their own and their students' learning. In this introduction I show how the originality of my own contribution is in the relationally dynamic meanings of my value of responsibility for others. My value of responsibility for my students includes acknowledging safety, care, honesty, creativity, enjoyment and excellence. In this introduction I also point to the epistemological significance of clarifying these meanings in an e-Learning curriculum in Higher Education.

In this paper I will discuss what I mean by visual narratives. I will show how my learning in school and Higher Education has shaped my teaching. I will explain the importance of emotions in teaching and learning and how this has influenced my emerging pedagogy. Finally, I will describe the Masters programme at Dublin City University and how I am supporting students on the M.Sc. in Education and Training Management programme. This special issue comprises four papers by students I am supporting. The papers show the values, ethos and spirit of the course I run and the influence of my own research to introduce creativity and visual literacy into Higher Education studies for practicing educators.

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Introduction

Vision without action is a dream,
Action without vision is simply a passing the time,
Action with vision is simply making a difference.

Joel Barker

During my 21 years teaching experience I have been working at co-creating an educational space which fosters growth, instills confidence, develops self and others, encourages innovation and promotes fun and dynamic engagement with learning. In this educational space, students enjoy the learning process while at the same time being creative and productive. Creating this safe environment is my responsibility as an educator and is in keeping with my values of security, care, creativity, honesty, enjoyment and excellence. I want to move away from the traditional Third Level approach to teaching and learning that usually expects one-dimensional academic formats like text. Rather, I see the use of multi-modalities (Gee, 2004) as broadening the horizon and opening up an enjoyable environment that is integral to lifelong learning; this is also aligned with the thinking of the New Media Consortium (2007).

People have been socialised to see universities as places where students gain their qualifications by passing examinations or submitting essays. There has been little thought or care about the quality of the educational space they inhabit while working towards their qualification. This dualism has been a concern of mine for some time and one that I have tried to address in my own practice as I work in the co-creation of an educational space for and with postgraduate students. 'Let us search instead for an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict' (Schön, 1983, p.49).

I will explore my understanding of visual narratives and show how my learning in school and Higher Education has shaped my teaching. I will explain the importance of emotions in teaching and learning and how this has influenced my emerging pedagogy. I will then describe the Masters programme and how I am supporting students on the M.Sc. in Education and Training Management (eLearning) strand.

The papers I introduce include the following:

- How do I produce a video artefact to facilitate greater understanding of the competence learning-to-learn? Shane Crossan.
- How do I produce a web accessed video that will educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time at Club level in Special Olympics? Deirdre Flood.
- How has my learning enabled me to create and share an animated video to assist Newly Qualified Teachers in the creation of a safe critical space for their students? Emma Gallagher.
- How can I use video to improve teacher engagement with my school's abundant ICT equipment? Laura Sloyan.

I could have chosen a number of equally excellent narratives to present in this paper.

Visual Narratives of Learning – The Enlightened Eye

The purpose of my Master's enquiry (Crotty, 2005) entitled, 'How do I create a visual narrative that contributes to my learning and the learning of others?' was to create a video to help develop a better understanding of non-national students within the wider school community. My enquiry started with a concern that there were traces of racism evident in my school environment from both staff and students and I hoped that through the use of video, I could work with the non-national students, to help them represent themselves and their culture to a wider audience. At this time I was working as a teacher in Second level education. Through the creation of the visual narrative I showed how I was living my educational values (Whitehead 1989, 2005) more fully in my practice. The whole process involved my developing skills in videography through the pre-production planning stage, the production stage of filming the footage and the post-production process of editing the video.

It is important at this stage to explain what I mean by a 'visual narrative'. As a music teacher, I have produced and directed many musical shows. One such example was a musical I wrote, directed and produced about the life and work of Nano Nagle, the founder of the Catholic Presentation Congregation and also the school I was teaching in at the time.



[Web-link 1. Nano Nagle Story](#)

Following the success of the Concert at a local level in Clondalkin, Co. Dublin it was performed at the Irish National Concert Hall and enjoyed international acclaim as we toured America. Ten years on I have recently relaunched the 'One Step Beyond' album first recorded in 2001 by the students of the Presentation school, Coláiste Bríde in Clondalkin, Ireland. This album can be accessed on iTunes.



[Video 1. Nano Nagle Musical – One Step Beyond](#)

My later video productions were an extension of the expertise I gained while producing Concerts like this. I subsequently used my videography skills to shoot and edit footage to produce an artistic piece of work that would best convey my message. The visual narratives I describe are Enhanced Visual Narratives Productions and use techniques within video production. I use Farren and Whitehead's (2006) approach to producing [multimedia narratives](#) as valid multimedia explanations of learning. However, the visual narratives I describe are all produced to enhance their educational content. They are time-consuming to design, develop and produce.

This is a development in my thinking since I co-wrote an article with Farren in 2008 on 'visual narratives' (Crotty and Farren, 2008). The term visual narrative did not fully describe the way I was making use of videos with my students. The videos I produce and empower my students to produce usually require storyboarding, production and post-production work. This development in my thinking was later validated by one of my students, Deirdre Flood as she saw the use of the words 'visual narratives' as being incongruent with what she had experienced during the multimedia modules of the Masters in Education and Training Management (eLearning strand). The purpose or teaching intentions of the video (Koumi, 2006, p108) comes first and the personal values and creativity of the producer are evidenced in the video production itself. These videos seek to be subtle in their educational message but are aesthetically pleasing and excellent in their delivery to entice or 'hook' (Koumi 2006, p143) the audience to want to learn more.

My Learning – The Enlightened I

According to Alheit (cited in Illeris, 2009, pp. 116-128) in order to embrace future change, it is vital that we are able to critically reflect on our past and current learning experiences. As a Second level student in a very traditional academic school, I experienced a very strong emphasis on the importance of language and mathematics. Even though I was in a top stream class, my love and flair for Art and Music did not seem to be weighted with the same degree of respect and value. If someone had been excellent at Maths, they were deemed 'very intelligent' but an excellent music or art student was seen to be 'very talented' with no reference to intelligence.

Historically the classroom is a place where the teacher is held in high esteem. Students mostly learnt from textbooks and the tacit knowledge of their tutor. During twenty-one years as a teacher, both at second and third-level, I have witnessed students experiencing fear and anxiety about their own sense of worth. In fact my own experience as a student was no different! Fear of not "knowing enough" to be able to freely express myself, dominated my experience of the school and college environment. The teacher or lecturer was seen as the expert and knowledge giver while the student remained a passive recipient to the exclusion of critical creative thinking. Perhaps, I was not studious enough or maybe this is how I now perceive it some years later. Maybe, I did not feel comfortable enough to fully engage in lessons because the conditions of learning (1983) were not suitable for me to enjoy the process of my learning. Whatever the reason, I certainly was not energised or engaged by the content that I was studying at that time.

My school friends and I are all professionals now, which clearly demonstrate that the system worked at one level. However, conversations with classmates from my school days remind me that our educational experience could have been more enjoyable and meaningful although it is worth saying that my schooling at Second level was enjoyable nevertheless. In secondary school, I was fortunate to know my classmates very well because the majority of this cohort had been my peers since primary school. As teenagers we were close and had good fun together in school although a healthy competition existed between us keeping our attentions focused. We often shared knowledge during the class breaks in an effort to stay on top of our studies especially if we had not spent time studying the night before. Through these regular interactions and sharing of information and learning, we were becoming a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) and providing scaffolding and assistance to one another in the spirit of Vygotsky's ideas (1934). Frequently, these exchanges provided the seeds of understanding we needed in order to unlock difficult concepts, which had previously been covered by the teacher but not fully assimilated by us. This informal learning and collaboration was the connection we needed to critically analyse what we were learning and I believe was a key skill for each of us in our future success.

As a student I enjoyed the practical aspect of learning and being involved in visual projects that helped me understand the concepts we were learning in class. Like John Dewey (1859-1952) I believe that "education should not be a preparation for life because education is life itself." However, as a pupil I found that a holistic practical approach to education was missing in school. Most of my learning at school involved writing assignments. Outside school, however my experience was different as I involved myself in music, singing, Irish dancing and sport, which were invaluable learning opportunities in my life. Most of the classroom resources in our lessons were text based. We did not experience the use of visuals as Burmack (2002) describes to enhance subject matter except some illustrations in books. In general, the teachers were didactic in their methodological approach and there was little true engagement between teacher and student except for one notable exception, a dynamic teacher of English who inspired creativity and encouraged cross-curricular activities.

Her learning-to-learn approach fostered authentic learning as we critically analysed stories, poems, and drama. This learning-to-learn approach was not just about developing skills but having a deeper comprehension of those skills. The teacher demonstrated her beliefs and values while at the same time being versatile enough to be effective and engendering the desire and enthusiasm to learn as described by Rogers (1983) and (Kolb, 2004). An authentic learning environment provides a context that reflects how knowledge and skills are used in real life (Gulikers, Bastiaens and Martens, 2004). Although we explored dated literary works, interactive group projects planned around these works brought us into the real world of life long learning. To give one memorable example, we worked on one project in groups to draw life size images of Shakespearean characters, which were later displayed at a public exhibition entitled "Visions". While creating cut-out characters, we were asked to summarise each of the characteristics attributed to the cast of the Shakespearean drama on our course. This exercise captured our attention, allowed us to lose ourselves in the task at hand and learn in a similar process to the 'flow' described by Csíkszentmihályi (1975). It was inclusive and absorbing and our knowledge, understanding and collaborative skills were developed through first-hand practical experience and evaluation. I felt it was important to all of us that our work was of the highest quality and we were proud to show it. It is no coincidence that the majority of the class achieved top honours grades in this subject when assessed in our National State Examinations at both Intermediate Certificate (now renamed Junior Certificate) and Leaving Certificate level.

My own degree is in Philosophy and Education, subjects explored while studying for my undergraduate B.Sc. Religious Education degree at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin. Farren (2006) drew on the idea of the Web of Betweenness (O'Donohue, 2003) through her use of ICT in her research. I am also familiar with John O'Donohue's work. His audio recordings entitled '[Anam Chara](#)' (Soul Mate) have been a source of spiritual replenishment to me in my professional career. I regularly link with his concept of the Web of Betweenness (though not naming it) and reflect on how I am practically and dynamically facilitating a web of creative yet connected educational space in Higher Level Education. As a secondary school religion and music teacher, I was privileged to teach a large number of students and be at the helm of organising numerous events as well as musicals that would bring their talents and intelligences to the fore. It has been my experience that live events of this nature really bring the best out in teachers, students and all participants. Even students who struggled with literacy skills blossomed in this dynamic environment and their contribution was as valuable as anyone's once a safe environment was provided. I care that everyone should know that they make a difference, are special and feel valued. It can be challenging at times when emotions of fear, self doubt and frustration impede the learner but as an educator I try not to be a 'living contradiction' (Whitehead, 2009) and do my best to facilitate an environment where people enjoy discovering how they are intelligent.

Emotions in Learning – Turning the Tide of Emotion.

Robinson (2009) in his book 'The Element' suggests that people need to change the question from how intelligent are you to more significantly how are you intelligent? Gardner's (1993) research on the different types of intelligences emphasises the importance of focusing on this kind of question. Had I been more aware of this kind of thinking, it would have been comforting for me as a student to realise that education did not revolve around cognitive and intellectual considerations alone. There might have been more emphasis placed on learning experiences allowing us to develop our visual, musical, physical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional, naturalistic, creative and spiritual intelligences. Gardner's theory instills a confidence in me that, for example, kinesthetic intelligence is as valid as numerical and interpersonal intelligence as important as linguistic.

In my experience, emotions did not seem to play as important a part in the education system as I believe they should. We were not encouraged to recognise and explore our emotions in the context of our learning, although they were not quite as discounted as in Plato, who considered that emotions were 'inappropriate territory' and a place not to be visited. To be unhappy as a student because we did not like Maths was almost to admit that you were not intellectual. On reflection, I think I was not partial to Maths because the subject never seemed relevant to our real life and problem solving was not part of the equation! (Now Maths is very relevant to my life as I continuously complete budgets that are vital for acquiring funding to make things happen creatively for my students e.g. - [Diverse Live Video Crew](#). Acknowledging that someone was 'street wise' was as near to conceding that emotional intelligence existed during my primary and Second level schooling.

Dewey (1934) in his writings was concerned that due to a dearth of emotion in education, people were alienated from their immediate surroundings and this resulted in their being disconnected from their 'emotional affective self'. If questions had been addressed such as: How do you feel? Are you

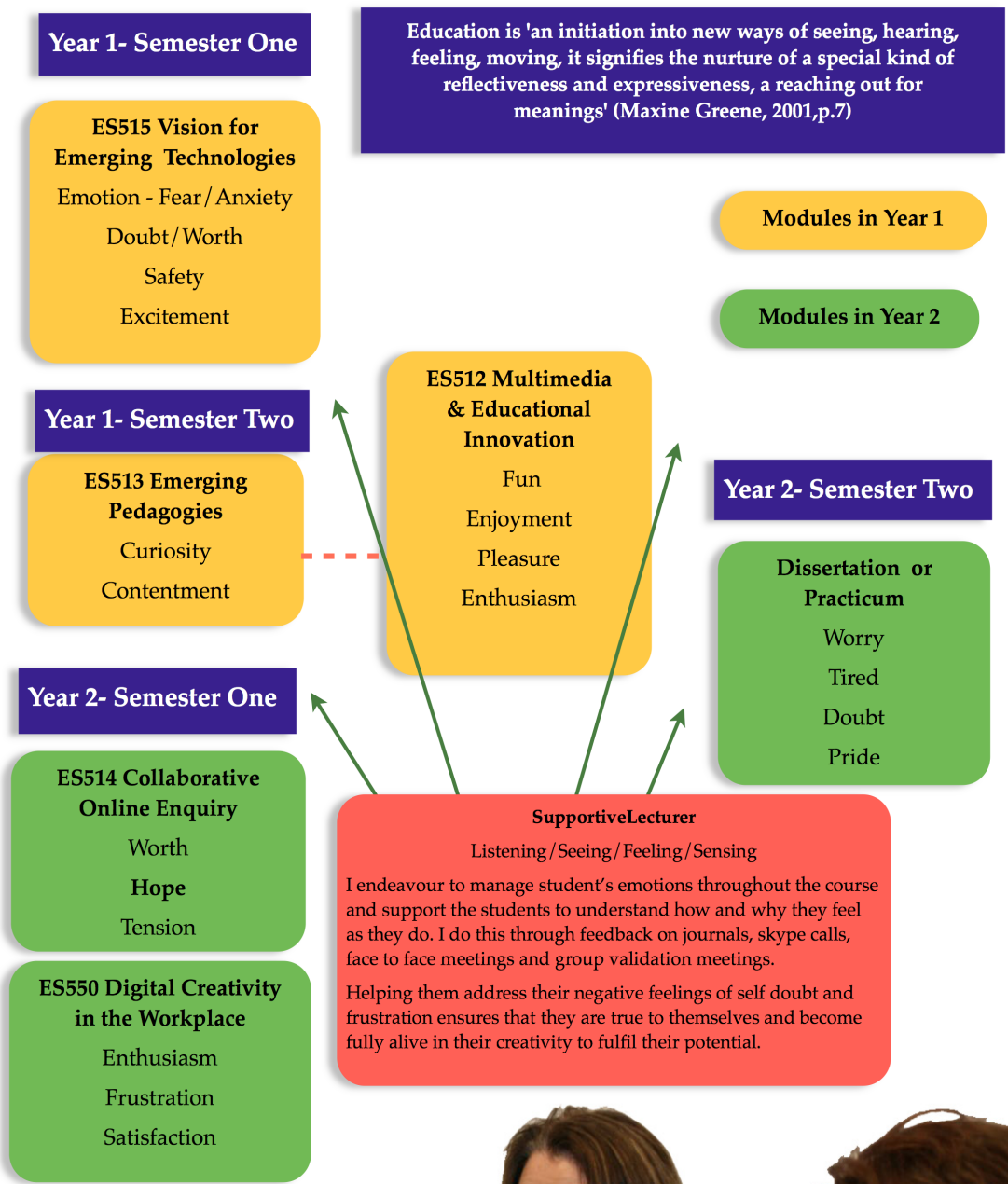
anxious? Do you feel that you can achieve your goals? Are you happy? Do you find learning this subject excites you? Are you proud that you can use your learning for the greater good of society?, it might have made the educational experience more meaningful and connected to real life. Early in my career as a secondary school teacher, I was often asked by other teachers to deal with troublesome and apparently less academic students as my colleagues felt I had an ability to get through to students and motivate them to work. I realised that I was relating to my students using my more developed emotional intelligence and achieving positive results. Reflecting on my practice this is very illuminating and an aspect of significance in my teaching and learning and also in my research.

In my experience, positive affirmation and supporting the emotions that arise through students' learning journey can be transformative. It is important for me in my teaching and learning to address the whole human being, mind, heart and body, to ensure that I make a connection with students at an emotional level. My aim is to help guide them to envision a better future for themselves. This confirmed for me that 'having a vision, or a sense of direction in life gives people a purpose to change' (Beard and Wilson 2006, pg 179). They draw on Bagshaw's definition of emotional intelligence, 'the ability to use your understanding of emotions, in yourself and others, to deal effectively with people and problems in a way which reduces anger and hostility, develops collaborative effort, enhances life balance and produces creative energy' (p. 175). The authors also assert that all facilitation needs a good understanding of emotional intelligence. In my position as lecturer in the School of Education at Dublin City University, I bring this knowledge into my teaching. 'To get to the heart of Higher Education' (Palmer and Zajonc, 2010) is what is called for in order to liberate Third Level Education to become capacity building environments. There is a call for universities to renew the ways in which they educate the whole person. In my work, I try to address the concerns that the above authors raise as I awaken the deepest potential in students through a holistic, creative approach to teaching and learning. Hence, I was heartened by Perkin's (2009) story of how he used to play baseball as a child. Although not a great player himself, he emphasises that 'the process' was most important to him at that time because he enjoyed the learning experience it presented. With advice from his father and simply playing the game with his friends, he learned how to bat, run, catch and field. From the outset he was exposed to the overall game however basic his comprehension was, and as a result, he knew how to improve it because he could see the overall picture.

I draw on Perkin's writing for two reasons. I identify with it both emotionally and cognitively. Firstly, the story engaged me on an emotional level and I identified with the caring relational qualities demonstrated through his reference to his father teaching him to play and explaining to him the way the game worked. I was touched and captured by the sheer loveliness of this young boy playing a game he enjoyed and how now as a grown man he feels content at having such fond memories of this learning experience. Secondly, his use of this analogy clearly explains the importance of having a holistic approach. This enables us to learn and understand its constituent parts. It is welcome how he uses story, breaking down important points for his readers to convey his meaning more fully. I love hearing stories that give me a greater insight into people, theory and concepts. My use of 'enhanced visual narrative productions', are an extension of this. Moon (2010) is also an advocate for 'using story' and like Gerrig (1993) feels that there is something exciting about the way 'story' can be a 'mode of transportation' and in Perkin's 'story', the meaning has travelled very well to enhance understanding. In my teaching, I espouse that to 'learn about' (Perkins, 2009) and to have an overall vision for a programme, module or subject, is initially crucial to any learning process. I believe it is vital for each student to build up from the basics with the bigger picture in mind so that they can

have a more enjoyable learning experience; It also instills confidence and allays any apprehension they may have. I bring this thinking into my work.

The journey for my students on this two-year programme can be a very emotional one. Like life's odyssey itself, learners experience many highs and lows that they have to deal with and work through. In Figure 1, I have outlined some of the emotions that they feel from the journal evidence I have gathered and also from my own experience in lectures and validation meetings. Balancing working life, family life and personal life with college commitments can be quite challenging. Energy levels and emotions vary. It is all part of the process and although difficult at times, most participants say they ultimately feel proud of their sense of achievement despite the many mixed emotions encountered on the way. Goleman (2011) similarly contends that emotional intelligence is recognised as a basic attribute of excellent leadership and is key ingredient to having a fulfilling life. I too experience many emotions on this journey and have learnt to manage them to ensure a special safe educational space for all concerned.



Reference:
Community In The Making: Lincoln Center
Institute, The Arts And Teacher Education
(The Series on School Reform)



Figure 1. Emotions from Journal Evidence.

In the following journal entries, I document my reflections on two validation meetings with eight Master's Degree students. They all said that the validation group meetings were a great source of support as they worked through the difficulties and frustrations of doing a Master's dissertation. I include the first journal entry in its entirety as I feel it captures my reflections on two important episodes. As evident from the first journal entry, the frustration subsided for Marie as she went on to present an excellent piece of research work at the final validation meeting in May 2011. In the second part of the journal I document my own concern on how best to advise one of the students, Neasa, to re-edit her work. I reflect on the best way to give feedback to students in order to avoid breaking their spirit. In the end, both students completed first class work that has since been validated at Masters Degree level. This confirms my belief that with perseverance, encouragement and an open approach to learning, people can achieve excellence. I believe that when we are open to receiving constructive criticism from people who can be trusted and have our best interest at heart, educational environments are healthier learning spaces. An extract from my second journal entry captures the pride I felt after the students presented their final research work.

My Journal Entry - Validation meeting April 2011

I really felt for Marie this evening. I understand completely why she is upset. She is feeling very disheartened and aired that in the validation meeting. I know that she knows she is so near completing everything but yet it all seems so far away for her. This is the frustrating part for both of us. I know what she is capable of as she always produces really great work. I think part of that frustration is that she just wants to get it right but the self-doubt is obviously beginning to set in. Just the sheer tiredness at this stage would impact on how anyone feels and how they may perform accordingly. I can empathise with the fact that she is so close to her work that she cannot see the wood from the trees. I hope I am not pushing the students too hard to achieve their best but I know that they have so much more within them and they don't even realise it. I have to address this next year. Is there anything I can do to alleviate their frustration? When students get to this stage the intrinsic motivation needs to drive them forward. I think I have whetted their appetites and the sense of possibility from first year and hopefully that will drive them to do their best. However, it takes subtle nudging and encouraging. I read that the best educators are encouragers and that there is a direct link here to teaching for creativity. Make sure that through teaching creatively you empower pupils by building them up rather than knocking them down. Communicate a 'can do' attitude in your subject rather than a 'this is difficult or complicated' one. I know this to be true but I have to be credible for my students and there needs to be a balance. I really felt that I had to be mindful of that balance tonight. I have tried to encourage and show that to achieve success is possible (as Zander and Zander say) it is about the 'art of possibility'. This evening Marie seemed so overwhelmed with self-doubt that it was beginning to cloud her vision. I know it is not about the qualifications anymore but about completing work they feel is the best that it can possibly be.

I instinctively knew it was the wrong time to start appeasing Marie. I will contact her and talk to her in a few days. The sense of care in the room was really lovely and if life could create situations where people feel they are really comfortable enough to be themselves and be upset, excited or whatever, it would make for a better world. I am well aware of the balance because I have to heed it myself. It is all about balancing the emotions in this kind of delicate situation. The sensitivity and care I witnessed from the others in the room was very heartening. It is a testament to the bond that has developed over the two years and it feels very good and affirming for all of us. As the saying goes "this too will pass, it always does!....."

Validation Meeting 2nd April 2011

Sometimes Validation meetings can be very trying and tonight was one case in point. When Neasa showed her video, I sensed that she thought it was finished and that there were no more changes to be made. She was so excited showing it and my heart was torn as I looked at the little things I knew still needed to tweak in order for it to be just right. I was unsure whether to just leave it or not. I really think that people can only take so much

and I have to be very careful not to push anyone too far in case they lose all interest, feel disheartened and simply give up. On the other hand, I knew I had to be honest and fair to Neasa because it only will take a few small changes to correct it. I think if it was left as is, those small things will detract from the video. I could see that she was upset. My gut response was to stop the video and say 'it will be grand' rather than see someone feel so bad however, I knew this was not the answer. Overall, I feel it will be a better life lesson and when Neasa is finished she will stand over her work and know that having listened to the validation group, the video is the best it can be. I was thrilled that everybody started giving feedback individually. Neasa's reaction was absolutely great. What a strong response. Although upset, I could see that she wiped the tears and trusted that people were telling her about the various details that we all knew needed changing. It was clear to me (obvious) that they cared too. She said that after the shock of initially being told that it was not quite there, she was very appreciative of our honesty. The suggestion of adding a supplementary book for people to understand the Irish will really enhance the research work. I am delighted too and it reaffirms for me that honesty is best policy although hard to deliver at times. I never like to see anyone upset. It was an emotionally draining evening but I really think everyone is on track again and has a renewed energy to reach their goals and feel happy with their work. I hope I am right!

Neasa's Entry from her own blog for the same date

Previous to this meeting I had worked on including the recommendations from the validation group. I had pitched the video too high and the validation group highlighted this for me. The group acted like a focus group for me, they have secondary school Irish like the parents. If they could learn from this video then I have succeeded in making a valuable resource.

At the meeting I showed my video, confident that I had addressed the concerns. I got a bit of a shock when some members of the group said that I still had pitched it too high. They did however say unit one was easier to understand than unit two, because I had included English translations. I was asked if I would do the same for unit two. I automatically replied that I wanted to scaffold the viewers' learning and that was my rationale for not including translations in unit two. It is a documented fact that when learning a language the learner should not rely on English translations. Immersion is the key when learning the language. The beauty of a video is that the viewer can stop and rewind to hear the sentence again.

I used the children's voices to be true to my value of inclusion and engagement. By using their voices it will act as an incentive for parents to watch the video and hear their child speak.

It was suggested at the meeting that I would design an accompanying booklet for the video and include the translations at this stage. This would address the concern that unit two was pitched too high. A member suggested that parents could stick it on the fridge and that they could refer to it during the day. I don't feel that I am abandoning my belief in the video, I am just providing additional support to parents in the form of a supplementary booklet.

The process of validation has improved and refined my video. It was hard initially presenting my work to the members but without that constructive criticism I do not think that my video would have evolved to what it is today.

I can honestly say that I found the process very useful.

1. being able to discuss and accept the shortcomings of the video at various stages of the design

2. In the latter stages of the design I was able to justify why I didn't include some of the recommendations of the group. That was liberating for me. I felt that I had earned the right to protect my creation because I had studied the theory that could justify my opinion. For example why I didn't want to include English translations. I am an educator and to be true to my value of life long learning I could justify scaffolding the viewers learning in unit two

My Journal entry after the final Validation Meeting May 2011

I could not believe how emotional I felt today after seeing the students present their final thesis work to Jack. I felt so nervous as each one of them presented and my 'heart was in my mouth' as I knew it meant so much to all of the students. Neasa was beaming and delighted that she had adjusted the video and worked on the supplementary book. I think it actually gave her some extra confidence in her presentation. She laughed and said it was all worth the pain"! I felt so emotional speaking and I had no idea where it came from. The irony is I felt safe enough to be. I was so proud of all of them!

The following video (video 2) is of a Validation meeting that took place in May 2011 and was attended by Professor Jack Whitehead and the eight students who developed a video artefact as part of their Masters dissertation. I addressed the students after they presented their research. It was a very moving occasion for me as I had guided and supported the students through the research process and was very proud of the way in which each one of them demonstrated scholarship and professionalism. The next video (video 3) I tried to capture the journey that is the Masters in Education and Training Management (eLearning) programme.



Video 2. Capturing the Emotions (password emotions)



Video 3 There is a place

My Emerging Pedagogy and Educational Values

The transformational influence of eLearning in schools, universities and workplaces continues to grow. Research into these ever-changing influences in teaching and learning is not well-understood (New Media Consortium, 2007, p. 4) and requires further research. Hence my doctoral research is a self-study of my influences in learning in Higher Education as a lecturer on the e-Learning modules on the Masters programme at Dublin City University. These modules are at the cutting-edge of educational innovation integrating ICT skills in the curriculum and extending to more enhanced video production the use of multimedia narratives to explain educational influences in learning (Crotty, 2005; Farren and Whitehead, 2006).

Focusing on my values of: 1) Security; 2) Enjoyment; 3) Creativity; 4) Honesty; 5) Care and 6) Excellence, gives me clarity of purpose and requires me to be mindful of what fosters an environment that allows me to adhere to these values. They are also the standards of judgment to which I hold myself accountable. I care that the students feel comfortable enough to voice their anxieties honestly and in doing so, can begin to enjoy the learning experience. Hopefully this will unleash their creativity while being in their 'element' (Robinson, 2009). I care that they are not paralysed by feelings of inadequacy, and I also feel a responsibility, as an educator, to support the students in the challenges they may encounter as they work towards attaining standards of excellence and scholarship.



Video 4. My Claim – Valid or Not?

I have been pondering on the meaning of the following lines, which I have taken from the Keats poem, 'Ode to a Grecian Urn':

Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

(John Keats)

The words 'truth' and 'beauty' reflect my own ontological values and I try to communicate these using different forms of multimedia in my creative work. During the various modules on the M.Sc. in Education and Training Management (eLearning) programme, I endeavour to create an environment that allows my students to be true to themselves as they allow their inner beauty and creativity to 'flow' (Csikszentmihályi, 1975) and produce academic work that truly represents what they really want to express and not what they feel others want them to convey. To elaborate, I have found that mature students returning to Higher Education tend to be more vulnerable than those who have come straight from school. They may be successful in their jobs and are returning to education for a

variety of reasons to: take part in professional development; change direction in their job; gain a qualification in an area they are already familiar with; participate in the programme for the sake of continuing their education.

Whatever the rationale for entering the programme, almost all are initially afraid to expose themselves in case they appear to be incompetent. While they might feel competent within their own positions at work, returning to study, meeting new people from various work backgrounds, writing assignments and using technology prove to be very challenging for them. I find it critical to immediately name the possible concerns and then give answers with practical solutions to allay any initial worry. Before long invariably, enthusiasm replaces anxiety; confidence replaces fear; and collaboration replaces reservation. Strong collaborative relationships are formed and foster verbal and intellectual creativity. The journey of truth and beauty thus begins. I believe it is crucial that students do not feel restricted by the learning environment to which they belong. Research indicates that the traditional methods used by university and teachers, quells creativity rather than nurture it (Ng, 2002). Hence I see my role as facilitative, caring and fundamental to creating change in their thinking as they come to realise that everyone has creative potential (Ala-Mutka et al., 2008). I am well aware that I have high expectations of each learner in terms of their creativity. I have found that this has acted as a stimulus to students' self-esteem and motivation (Craft, 2005; Robinson, 2001; Wyse & Jones, 2003).

Evidence from students' journals has shown that creativity plays an important underlying role and a source of innovation. Students come to know this truth immediately when embarking on the course as they are immersed in an environment that calls on them to think 'outside the box'.

"As a part time student, it can be very difficult to keep motivation levels at a constant. By being given the freedom to express myself creatively, I was able to sustain this interest." Gemma Clarke

The President of Dublin City University, Brian Mac Craith launched the [Graduate Attributes \(GA\)](#) programme (Generation 21) in September 2011. The aims are to shape graduates for life and work in the 21st century. These Graduates Attributes align with the current approach on the Masters programme. The applied nature of the Masters programme ensures participants choose topics for research, leading to further improvement in their workplace practice. It builds their knowledge and understanding of the dynamics at play in what is becoming an increasingly complex working and living environment.

I outline 'what I am doing on the course' and 'how am I doing it' to ensure that my students are working towards these proficiencies in the following diagrams (Figure 2 & 3). The Generation 21 programme also connects with my value of excellence.






<p>Personal Awareness & Development</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to self-appraise and to recognise both the possibilities and the boundaries of their knowledge and capabilities. They will take responsibility for their personal development and seek expert advice, where appropriate, to guide their decisions and actions.</p>	 <p>Personal Awareness & Development</p>	<p>All modules focus on this competence. Through the use of online journals, Moodle, and forums, students are consistently reflecting on their actions. It is an applied programme and the knowledge and insights gained through their assignments help students to improve their work-based practice. My continuous feedback through Moodle, Skype and face to face contact, aids the process and guides students where they need to improve. This action research approach helps them also recognise their limitations and possibilities, take responsibility for their actions and seek further advice where required.</p>
<p>Information Literacy</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to develop a high level of information literacy that encompasses a sophisticated, considered and critical approach to sourcing, organising, evaluating and using information.</p>	 <p>Information Literacy</p>	<p>All seven modules require students to find literature, think critically and evaluate the relevance of their chosen literature in the context of their own research. Students are required to write an academic piece for each module that backs up their claim to new knowledge. However, ES515, ES507, ES513 and ES514 are the main modules that focus on developing this particular graduate attribute and proficiency.</p>
<p>Interpersonal & Intercultural Competence</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to enhance their interpersonal skills, to develop an appreciation of intercultural issues, and to promote effective teamwork in environments of diversity.</p>	 <p>Interpersonal & Intercultural Competence</p>	<p>All modules promote this competence. It is the ethos of the programme to apply the knowledge and insights gained to improve their work-based practice. Through their assignments and action research approach they reflect on their work to recognise their limitations and possibilities.</p>
<p>Ethical & Professional Standards</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to develop a comprehensive understanding of ethical and professional standards as they engage with local, national and international communities of all disciplines and all cultures.</p>	 <p>Ethical & Professional Standards</p>	<p>Students are first introduced to ethical and professional standards in the ES515 module where they learn about copyright and accessibility when developing websites. Copyright and professional standards are once again practically considered during video production in the ES512 and ES550 modules. ES501. The Research Design module specifically focuses on the ethical and professional considerations needed for research work.</p>
<p>Research & Inquiry</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to draw on knowledge, concepts, methods and theories and to understand how they can influence developments and thinking. They will be encouraged to question, evaluate and communicate in order to improve their understanding of particular disciplines and fields.</p>	 <p>Research & Inquiry</p>	<p>The programme itself adopts an action research approach. ES513 and ES514 both specifically incorporate an inquiry research approach and all the assignments are building blocks towards defining students' main research interest which culminates in their dissertation.</p>
<p>Digital Intelligence</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to be fully competent in their use and application of digital technology. They will be encouraged to interact intelligently with the digital environment and to recognise the benefits of this to solve problems, to assess the credibility of information, to establish networks of authentic partners and to create meaningful outcomes for society.</p>	 <p>Digital Intelligence</p>	<p>All modules focus on this competence as it is an eLearning Masters. Use of Virtual Learning Environments such as Moodle to foster collaborative learning is integrated into each module. Development of educational resources on both platforms, Mac and PC, is also part of the programme. Among the technologies used to develop digital intelligence are: Web 2.0 technologies, development of websites, maintaining blogs, use of Articulate, and video production. The common thread throughout the Masters is the vision for use of technology as opposed to focusing totally on technical skills.</p>
<p>Intellectual Insight & Innovative Thinking</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to develop a keen sense of the importance of critically evaluating, appraising and reflecting. They will be encouraged to embrace new knowledge and engage in broad debate, recognising when resourcefulness and creativity are required in their approaches.</p>	 <p>Intellectual Insight & Innovative Thinking</p>	<p>All modules promote this proficiency as the creative approach on the programme lends itself to lateral thinking. Both ES512 and ES550 encourage innovative thinking through the development of <i>Enhanced Visual Narrative Productions</i> (EVNP). Linking ES512 Multimedia & Educational Innovation and ES513 Emerging Pedagogies modules piques students' intellect and broadens their understanding of pedagogy and research.</p>

Figure 2. Graduate Attributes



Figure 3. Graduate Attributes linked to the Masters modules

What do I mean by excellence?

In order to fully explain what I mean by this, I need to go back some years to recount a story that happened when producing and directing the musical 'One Step Beyond' that I referred to earlier. In my capacity as a music teacher in a Catholic Presentation Congregation girls' secondary school I brought together a 70 strong cast, which consisted of past pupils, students from first to sixth year and a number of teachers from the school. When one soloist fell ill and was unable to perform in the National Concert Hall, another student in the chorus offered to take her place. I was very slow to respond positively to her request and found it a very difficult decision to make. If I were to adhere to my value of inclusion, I would have immediately said 'yes' and would have been glad of an opportunity to reward this girl for the tremendous effort and commitment she had given up to this point. However, I value excellence and if I wanted to produce a show that was of the highest standard while remaining fair to the fantastic talent of everyone involved, I could not justify saying yes to a person whose performance was not of the calibre worthy of a solo piece. In addition, it is contrary to my value of creating a safe environment for people to perform or learn to knowingly put someone in a position where they would be open to criticism and ridicule.

As an educator, producer and director it was also important for me that any solo performance did not detract from the overall production. I had a responsibility to the others in my care. Any decision made by me had to be based on merit rather than on sentimentality. I tell this story to highlight the importance of keeping high standards and excellence for the overall good. My ultimate decision allowed everybody to be proud they were accomplishing the highest quality production, knowing that there was no weak link. There was an appreciation of the long hours and hard work everyone invested to achieve these standards. This show went from strength to strength touring America. Feedback received always described it as a very professional show. Turning down the girl who wanted to sing the solo song, led to my creation of a whole new successful dimension of that production in order that I found an appropriate role for her. Following her initial disappointment, her acting talent was realised when she played the main character in a cameo part. With her self-esteem intact, the production still remained at the highest standard and I remained true to my values.

The Art of Possibility in the Masters in Education and Training Management (eLearning)

Teaching on the postgraduate degree programmes poses a unique challenge as the students are attending on a part-time basis and many have been involved in formal education for some time. I strive to create a learning environment that values their knowledge and experience by basing their assignments in their work settings and using the online learning environment to enable collaboration and knowledge sharing among the participants. Participants record their learning using an online journal. It is my view that writing a journal gives students the opportunity to reflect on their learning and to clarify their thinking. I value enjoyment and I believe that having fun as an integral part of any module is most beneficial. Creating an enjoyable experience for students where they are in their 'flow' or 'element' helps to improve their retention, develop their collegial relationships, increase their workflow, increase their self-esteem and improve their productivity. These in turn impact on their workplace performance. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1975) people tend to be more creative when they are engaged in enjoyable activities. I derive great satisfaction when I see people, connecting with something that is very fundamental to their wellbeing. I am also 'in my element' (Robinson, 2009) and it defines who I really am. While I support my students to discover and define what they really want to do with their lives, I try to emphasise the importance of having a vision for technology rather than focusing on technical skills only. Technology can be used in a very

instructional way or it can be used to foster a community of learners both in class sessions and online. In his book the 'Landscape Within. Insights and Inspirations for Photographers', Ward (2004) emphasises that:

technical perfection alone is not enough; it will never be inspirational, it never make another human's heart beat faster, never bring a tear to another's face. To achieve these things we need to reach beyond the competent and the merely illustrative. We need to look for how to communicate emotion through art.....The importance of cultivating vision (p.11).

The group dynamic generated through an engaged collaborative learning approach to the subject content builds relationships and allows all students to participate fully. Sternberg and Lubart (1999) in their writings promote the importance of preparing the ground for creativity.

There are 7 modules on the two year part-time Masters in Education and Training Management (eLearning). Figure 4 outlines the learning outcomes of each of the modules:

ES515 Visions for Emerging Technologies;
ES507 eLearning: Culture & Organisations;
ES512 Multimedia & Educational Innovation;
ES513 Emerging Pedagogies;
ES514 Collaborative Online Enquiry;
ES501 Research Design;
ES550 Digital Creativity in the Workplace;
Or
ES509 Entrepreneurship in Education and Training Management.

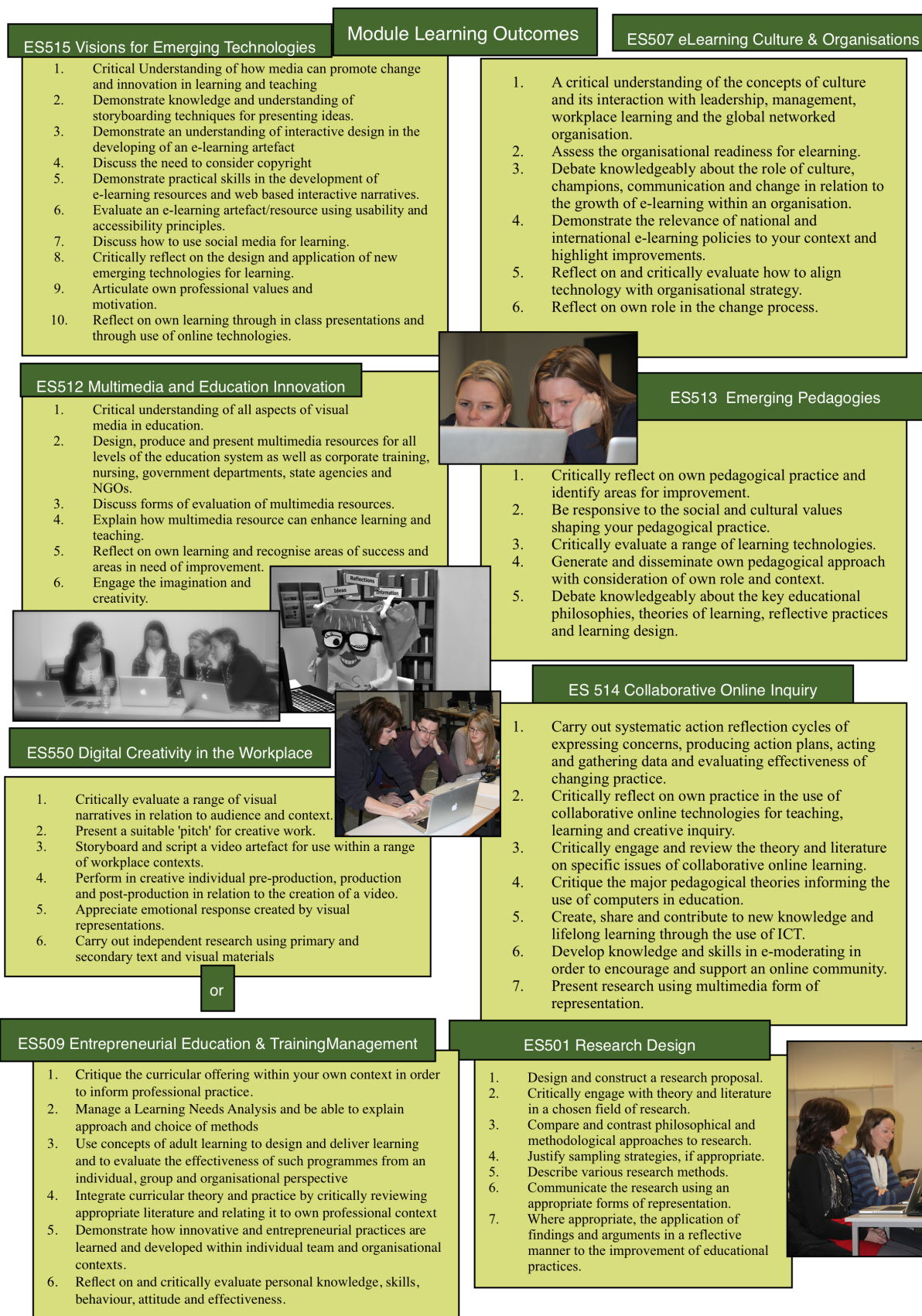


Figure 4. Module outcomes for Masters in Education and Training (eLearning)

After completing the seven modules the participants embark on the dissertation. I lecture on all but two modules, ES501 Research Design and ES507 eLearning: Culture and Organisations. However, as co-ordinator of the eLearning programme, I actively collaborate with my colleagues developing the content of the other two modules and am mindful to incorporate the terminology and literature covered in those two modules to reinforce their meaning when I am lecturing in my own modules. My input ensures that all modules are linked. The modules have been carefully designed so that they build on each other. This allays student anxieties and helps to instill confidence within them because they see a clear progression from one module to the next.

In Year 1, Semester 1 participants take two modules, Visions for Emerging Technologies (ES515) and e-Learning: Culture and Organisations (ES507). As the name suggests, the module Visions for Emerging Technologies (ES515) seeks to foster a vision for the creative use of emerging technologies. This bolsters the Keatsian notion that all you need to have is a vision for what you want to create. This module takes place in the first semester of Year 1 and I try to facilitate a collaborative approach throughout the module to encourage participants to share their ideas and insights while articulating their own professional values and motivations. I believe that it is important to help students to realise from the start of the programme that they have already a lot of tacit knowledge that they can draw upon in their assignments. The storyboarding developed in this module is later developed into a multimedia artefact in the Multimedia and Educational Innovation module (ES512) in semester 2.

In the following extracts, students talk about their experience of my teaching and it confirms the importance of being mindful of people's vulnerabilities and feelings when they embark on a postgraduate programme. It also highlights the need to give timely feedback in order to alleviate any unnecessary stress. The first example is taken from a student testimonial for the President's award for Excellence in Teaching in the Academic category (http://www.dcu.ie/education_studies/news/yvonne_award.shtml), which I was delighted to receive in May 2011. The other two sample extracts are from student online journals for the Visions for Emerging Technologies module which takes place in Semester 1, Year 1. These two extracts show the feelings of insecurity that students sometimes encounter when embarking on a postgraduate programme.

- "I was apprehensive returning to college as a mature student. Yvonne sensed that in the first week and took me to the side one day and reassured me. I didn't even think that she would know who I was at that early stage" (Cited in the President's Award for excellence in Teaching and learning received 2011)
- 'I was quite nervous starting this evening. Fear of the unknown really, also I was concerned over the presentation that is coming up in a few weeks. Yvonne acknowledged my concerns and went through the details in the class, which helped. The overall course delivery seems like it has a personal/individual approach, that lets people get involved in their own areas of interest, while the lecturer will guide us in the right direction' (Moodle Reflective Journal, 2010 O.M)
- Which brings me to my worries: There was a great comment said in class tonight - somebody remarked that young students today very often know more about technology than their teachers do. I can relate to this comment. Although I would like to think that I am quite up to

date with educational technologies, I am worried that my so-called 'experience' would seem rather pathetic to a teenager. I sometimes feel like I'm a parent trying to be 'hip' but getting it horribly wrong. Which brings me to my worries: Secondly, I am not sure how much support I would get from staff in my school if I attempted an 'ICT revolution'. Thirdly, I have a whole heap of worries about starting back at college, such as the workload, the people, the juggling of job and college. It is only now as I write this journal that I realise how many little things I have been worrying about. (J.C.2010)

In the e-Learning: Culture and Organisations module (ES507), participants gain a critical understanding of organisational culture, learning in the workplace and how to align technology with organisational strategy. In the second semester participants take two modules Multimedia and Educational Innovation (ES512) and Emerging Pedagogies (ES513). In the Multimedia and Educational Innovation module participants have the opportunity to engage the imagination and creativity through the design and creation of multimedia resources for all levels of the education system, corporate training, nursing, government departments, state agencies and non government organizations. This module links with the Emerging Pedagogies module in which the participants explore educational theories, key philosophies of education and critically reflect on own pedagogical practice and identify areas for improvement using ICT.

Eisner (1996) says that comic books have had a reputation for their usefulness with people of low literacy skills and limited intellectual accomplishment and their acceptance into the Academy has been less than welcome. I can testify that their creation by very able students on these two modules has acted as an invaluable learning tool on many levels. The students are asked to construct a comic strip (ES512) that requires them to determine what is most important from their reading in the emerging pedagogies module (ES513) and crystallise those complicated theories into orderly patterns of understanding. The creation of these visual comic strips, provide my students with an opportunity to develop their creativity and visual literacy skills. My intention for this assignment is that students would be both informed and entertained by the production process.

The following link demonstrates the connection between the Multimedia and Educational Innovation and Emerging Pedagogies modules.



[Web-link 2. Comic Life](#) (password and username: theory)

In Year 2 Semester 1, participants take three modules; Collaborative Online Learning ES514, Digital Creativity in the Workplace ES550 and Research Design ES501.

In the Collaborative Online Inquiry module participants develop their own pedagogical practice in the use of collaborative online technologies for teaching, learning and creative inquiry as they critically engage and review the theory and literature on specific issues relating to collaborative online learning. In ES501 Research Design module the participants design a research proposal for their dissertation. The module introduces them to the various philosophical and methodological approaches to research. They apply the findings and arguments in a reflective manner to the improvement of educational practices. In the ES550 Digital Creativity in the Workplace module participants use multimedia forms of representation to present their assignment, based on a topic relevant to Instructional Design or Video. This assessment for learning approach as seen in the Figure 5 below permeates throughout the programme and helps the student to learn in the process of completing their assignments.

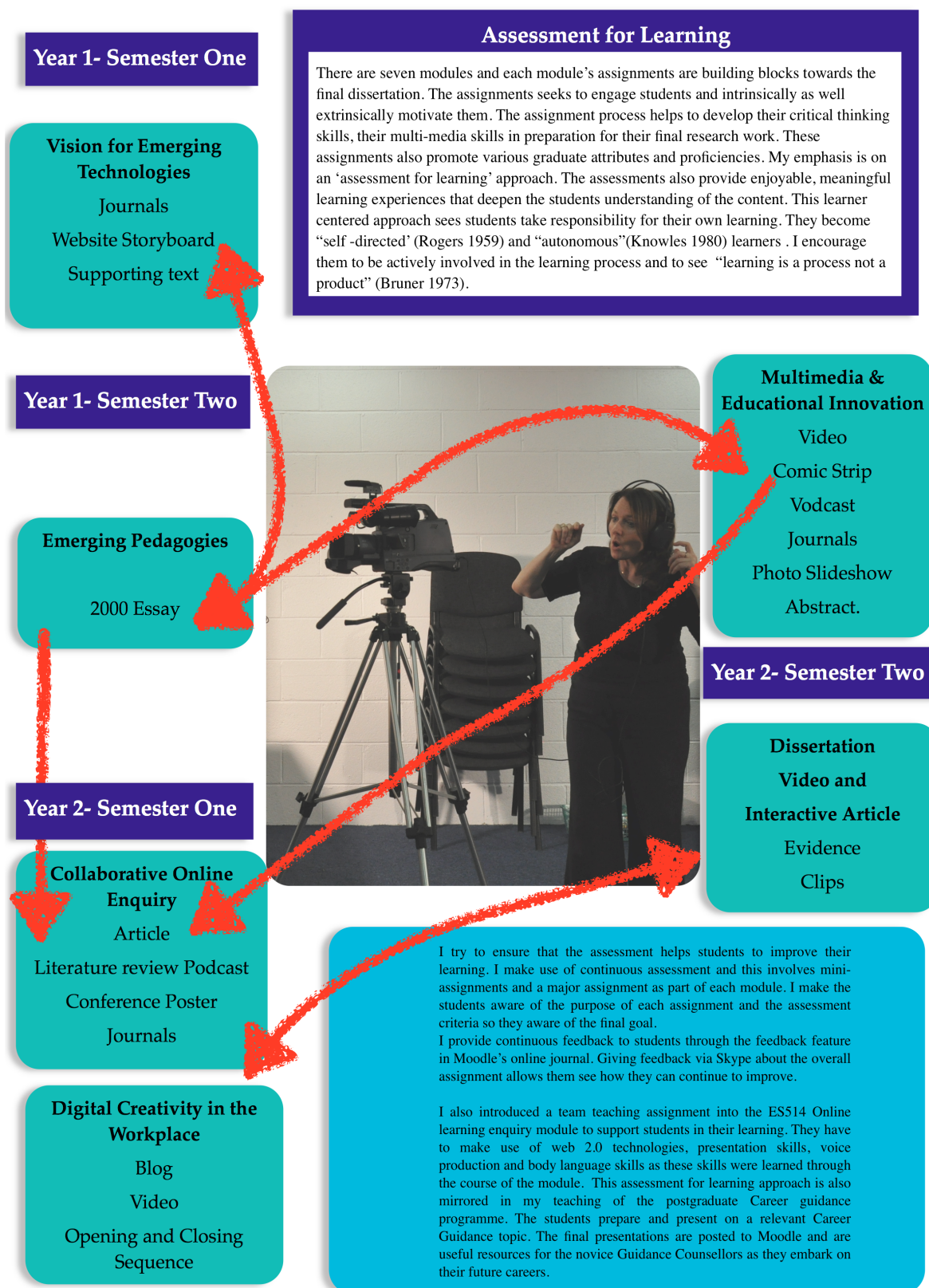
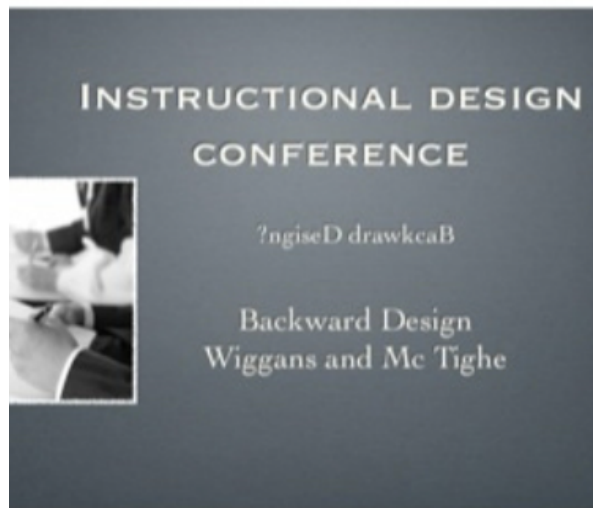


Figure 5. Assessment for Learning on the Masters for Education and Training Management (eLearning)

The final vodcasts and blogs are posted to Moodle as a resource for everyone's learning.



Web-link 3. Instructional Design Assignment

I also post resources that I create to help with the learning process.



Video 5. Action Research

The focus above is on improving practice by showing evidence of artefacts brought into existence that did not previously exist in enquiries into improving practice. I try to ensure that the assessment helps students to improve their learning (Fig. 5).

The research programme outlined below contributes to these understandings in explanations of educational influences produced by participants in the e-Learning curricula. In relation to my research enquiry into transforming educational knowledge in schools, universities and other workplaces with educational innovations and living video documentaries in the e-Learning curriculum, I will now consider the four articles in this special issue.

Shane Crossan: How do I produce a video artefact to facilitate greater understanding of the competence learning-to-learn?

In his research, Shane sets out to improve his practice as a Youth Service Manager and Youth Work Trainer. He focuses on how to enhance and support youth workers in understanding their own learning capacity by creating a digital video artefact, in collaboration with staff and his trainer colleagues, to explore the concept learning-to-learn. Shane demonstrates his technical competence, but above all his growing capacity to be creative as he explains how he designs and develops the media artefact:

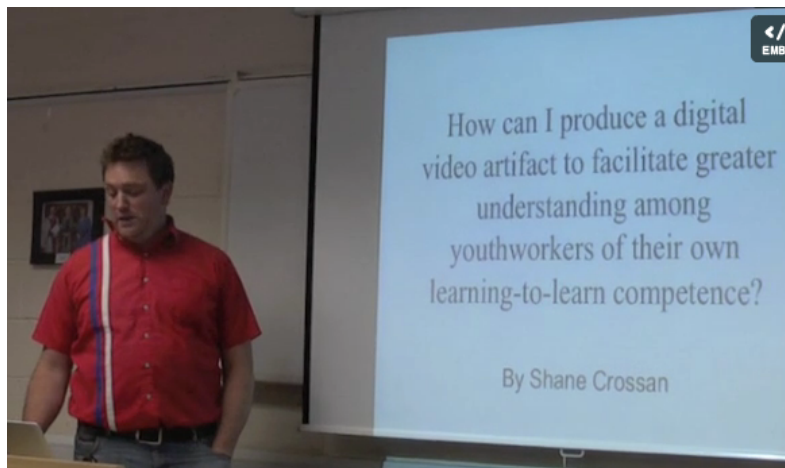
I had underestimated how important it was to engage creatively with the project - as it was eventually these creative decisions that moved the project significantly towards my objectives.

At the end of the research, Shane discusses how the research process challenged his own understanding and attitude towards learning. He began to realise the importance that creativity played in his research and how:

The development of an imaginative story narrative and the decision to use the hand-drawn story board illustrations in the final media artefact were both creative acts that moved the research forward and overcame the challenges of acquiring technical skills in stop-motion.

Shane's research demonstrates what Robinson (2010) alludes to when he talks about creativity not solely being about generating ideas but about making a judgment on those ideas. In my role as a supervisor I feel that it is essential that I strike the balance where students feel safe enough to have the freedom to explore new ideas while keeping their research work focused. I encourage students to believe in their creative side from the beginning of the programme and I design assignments that allow my students to find depths of creativity within themselves. Support for Shane's research work did not occur through new media such as Skype or modern online technologies but through regular phone calls and face-to-face meetings. Through these conversations, his creative ideas and critical judgments became clearer.

In his inquiry, Shane also highlights the significance of using story and drawing on his imagination to breakdown complex concepts into manageable chunks to finally create a media artefact that his youth workers could engage with and understand. There is a parallel between the methodology used by Shane when producing his video and that which I employ on the programme. From the onset of the Masters programme students are asked to draw on their own relevant stories to guarantee authenticity, accessibility and comprehensibility for their audience.



Video 6. Final Presentation and validation meeting

Deirdre Flood: How do I produce a web accessed video that will educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time at Club level in Special Olympics?

Deirdre focuses on her work with the Special Olympics and sees video as a tool to provide vicarious experiences for members and volunteers of the Special Olympics. In her video she shares her knowledge, which she hopes will make a difference in driving change in the viewer towards volunteering. As she tells her story she epitomises what I promote in my teaching as the important ability to be able to place facts in context and deliver them with emotional impact. The production of her video was a new way of thinking for Deirdre and her research celebrates that with good guidance, hard work and a clear vision, excellence can be achieved.

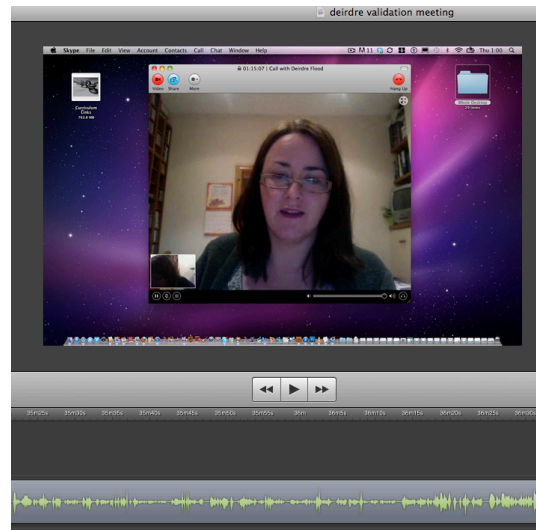
This has been further recognised by the MEDEA Awards - (<http://www.medeia-awards.com/>) a European annual competition supported by the Lifelong Programme of the European Commission. The annual conference is held in Brussels and encourages innovation and good practice in the use of media in education. This year saw Deirdre Flood win a special award, which recognises excellence in the use of media to support volunteering. This overall award was given to Deirdre for her video 'Changing Lives in Drogheda Special Olympics Club (Ireland).



Web-link 4: Medea Award Finalists

The criteria used to judge the quality of submissions to the MEDEA awards include pedagogical quality, use of media, aesthetic quality, usability and technical quality. In addition to all of these criteria, Deirdre's video also includes the values of excellence and equal opportunities. These are all values Deirdre highlights as being experienced by her in the Masters programme. She talks about feeling privileged to not only witness her own educational influences transform her work but also those of her peers. This reinforces the importance I place on creating a safe environment where trust and honesty prevail to allow even the smallest of transformations to occur.

A strong bond developed between the members of my class and I attribute this to the cultivation of a safe learning environment that enabled us to share our values along with doubts and concerns about our own work and each others without fear of ridicule. My supervisor Yvonne Crotty, facilitated this by empowering the team to trust our own sense of creative excellence, normalising our concerns, providing encouragement and support at a very individual level through feedback on journals and Skype calls.



Video 7: It's Good to Talk – A video showing how Skype has supported Deirdre's research process.

Like most people who embark on the course, Deirdre admits that she had never made a video or even owned a camcorder prior to commencing the Masters programme. Through the making of a video, as part of the Multimedia and Educational Innovation module she learned the basics of visual literacy and realised that it was like "learning a new language". The showcasing of previous students' research work helps to establish the standards required and gives direction for students like Deirdre.

I enjoyed the format and appreciated all the examples Yvonne provided from previous students. That really helped a lot! The practical element was very useful as we did a full dry run of what we need to do.

(Journal Entry March 2010)

Deirdre's video production skills can be clearly seen from the journey of the video completed for her first year assignment and that submitted for her thesis.



Video 8. First Year Video Assignment

In her Masters research Deirdre focused on the use of video to express aspects of her volunteer work that would not have been expressed through text alone. Through the course of her research Deirdre came to realise the power of video not only provides vicarious experiences but also stimulates critical reflection from the viewer. As is evident from her article she continues to make use of graphics, posters (Figure 6) and images similar to those required for assignments throughout the programme. She does this to detail her learning through the action research cycles. She realises that through her research she was learning the basics of visual literacy.

Teaching Dance in Special Olympics (Explored using Multiple Intelligence Theory & Differentiated Instruction)

By Deirdre Flood

Introduction

This study will illuminate the reasons why certain approaches to teaching dance in Drogheda Special Olympics Club have been successful by exploring the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983) and the essence of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson 2004) for people with an intellectual disability. The goal of this study is to identify various methods of instruction and considerations that will enhance the way the volunteers approach and deliver a programme of dance to our athletes in the future.

The approach to this research incorporates my engagement with living educational theory through the avenue of action research. My espoused educational values are that education should be inclusive, creative, engaging and fun and this motivated me to pursue an alternative route to fitness for our sports athletes in a group with significant mixed ability both physically and intellectually.

Gardner's pluralistic view of the mind and concept of multiple intelligences allowed me to take a broad spectrum approach to planning the Thriller dance practice sessions so that it would appeal to as many intelligences as possible and this feeds into the learning styles element of differentiated instruction.

The Challenge

Perform
"The Thriller Dance"
at a Gala Ball
March 2010
Boyne Valley Hotel, Drogheda

Six weeks to teach the athletes

Taught by volunteers of Drogheda Special Olympics Club



Spatial

The practice boundary in the gym was restricted to the size of the dance floor in the venue to allow the athletes with spatial difficulties to adjust to this area. I was also the main demonstrator providing constant visual cues for what form the dance should take.



Bodily/Kinesthetic & Linguistic

Having learned the dance myself from the videos on www.thrillerdance.com, I found the method promoted of saying words that describes the movement very useful instead of using number counts like 5,6,7,8. I used words like 'booty bounce and booty bounce', as we were performing the action. This linguistic labeling technique worked very well to the bodily movements.



Musical

All of the athletes enjoy listening and performing/expressing themselves through music. This usually takes the form of singing, tapping feet and explodes into dance!! When teaching dance however, I found that slowing the pace of movement to the same rhythm allows everyone to join in!

Broad Spectrum Approach towards Multiple Intelligence to speed learning!



Logical/Mathematical

Repetition of the same dance move sequence was a strong component in the success of the dance. The athletes could anticipate the next move much more easily. Counts were used for basic directional moves for example eight squats formed the basis of the Michael Jackson Move.



Intrapersonal

The athletes were asked periodically if they found a move particularly difficult and would like to go over the instruction again or needed help adapting the moves to their individual needs. Interpersonal intelligence was exhibited when the athletes could articulate their difficulty and work with the volunteer to find a solution.



Interpersonal

Consideration to the social aspect of learning the dance was very important and the approach taken encouraged teamwork and fun. The athletes even setup their own practice sessions in the Order of Malta Services Centre which introduced peer teaching!

Eight Multiple Intelligences



According to Gardner (1993, 2005), traditionally intelligence was defined operationally as the ability to answer items on tests of intelligence. Multiple intelligences (MI) theory, on the other hand, entails the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community. As a brain based computational system, each intelligence is activated or 'triggered', by certain kinds of internally or externally presented information.

- 1) Musical Intelligence**
The capacity to create, perform, and appreciate music e.g. composers
- 2) Linguistic Intelligence**
Ability to use language e.g. poets, writers, journalists.
- 3) Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence**
The capacity to solve problems or fashion products using the whole body, or parts of the body, like a person's hands or mouth as exhibited by athletes, dancers, actors, craftspersons, surgeons.
- 4) Spatial Intelligence**
The capacity to form mental imagery of the world and to manipulate those mental images e.g. pilot, artist or architect.
- 5) Interpersonal Intelligence**
Involves the understanding of other persons - how to interact with them, how to motivate them, how to understand their personalities e.g. teachers.
- 6) Intrapersonal Intelligence**
The capacity to understand oneself - strengths, weaknesses, desires and fears.
- 7) Logical/Mathematical Intelligence**
The capacity to understand data, analysis and numbers e.g. scientist.
- 8) Naturalist Intelligence**
The capacity to make consequential decisions in nature e.g. among animals. Our consumer culture could be based on this intelligence e.g. to differentiate one car from another.

Differentiated Instruction



Tomlinson and Kalbfleisch (1998) promote that differentiated classrooms are responsive to students varying readiness levels, varying interests and varying learner profiles. A study of differentiated instruction in Drogheda Special Olympics developed following my research on the cognitive theory of multiple intelligences when teaching the Thriller dance.

Teachers can differentiate

- Content
- Process
- Product

According to the students

- Interests
- Readiness
- Learning Profile

'A teachers response to individual learner needs!'

Conclusion

As someone who has no formal training in dance instruction, teaching Thriller to the athletes required a great deal of planning and effort on my part to make sure that everyone could get involved in the process and be able to perform as a unified group after a period of six weeks with a restriction of 1 hour of instruction each week.

A broad spectrum approach was used to appeal to as many intelligences as possible with the understanding that the Club does not have the remit, skills or resources to conduct in-depth intelligence or readiness assessments on each athlete. Indeed the club is more of a social space and therefore it lacks the rigour and resources of a formal learning institution. However, despite the constraints I have learned 'what works well', when teaching dance to the athletes in the club and I have highlighted this in the form of a video artefact for volunteers to avail of. Also by engaging myself with the literature on multiple intelligence, differentiated instruction and collaborating with the volunteers and athletes, I now understand why it works and I hope that the strategies employed in this endeavour will be built upon in the future!

Watch the video!!

Attempts were made to differentiate content/product based on interest by asking the athletes to suggest a dance they would like to learn and vote it in!

It is difficult to assess an athletes individual readiness to learn a new dance therefore a familiar start position for a race became the beginning pose for the dance. Everyone could do this!

In an effort to differentiate content, choices were built in by adapting moves on the spot for different athletes. A guidebook was also produced with various levels of instruction i.e. starting with the basic pose pictures representing each stage of the dance and building to a more advanced dance script



'Fulfilling my educational values that learning should be inclusive, creative, engaging and fun!'

Spiderweb artwork attributed to http://www.cdnartnet.com/cdnart_pcholiday/halloween/spiderweb_10081.html
Picture of Howard Gardner attributed to http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Howard_gardner.jpg

Figure 6. Conference Poster (Assignment)

Emma Gallagher: ‘How has my learning enabled me to create and share an animated video to assist Newly Qualified Teachers in the creation of a safe critical space for their students?’

In her article, Emma affirms my belief in the importance of creating a safe learning environment. She emphasises the positive methodologies employed on this Masters programme and not having to leave her passions and values aside when she embarked on the programme. With regard to her learning she says:

This research process has allowed me to re-awaken my creative self and link my personal and professional passion.

I asked Emma to communicate this by developing an animation using the Xtra normal software



Video 9. Animations about Values in Education

Emma talks about her previous experience of assessment that she felt did not reward or nurture her creativity. Instead she was examined on her knowledge at the end of a module or course of study through the traditional summative form of assessment. Although the summative or assessment of learning approach endeavoured to assure quality and academy accountability, Emma did not feel that the assessment process was as meaningful as it could have been. This excerpt from the article describes how, in her previous experience, there was little or no emphasis on the quality of assessment and its relationship to real life:

My previous experience was that there would be a very restrictive style of assessment that I could connect with only in a step-by-step manner, without creative engagement.

When referring to her new experience with assignments on the Masters programme, she says:

In the absence of such a ‘checklist’ of requirements, I was forced to trust myself to engage with the process on a creative level, in a way that captured my passion following a conversation with Yvonne after class where she suggested linking it to my love of poetry as an English teacher. The final slideshow enabled me to develop a new skill, photography, to marry it to this my passion, poetry, and to link those passions to my practice. I had never had the experience of being rewarded academically for my creativity.

Her restricted view of assignments had coloured her interpretation of assessment when she started this course. This is a view which Ramsden (2003) refers to when he states that students bring their history of learning with them thus impacting on their engagement in effective learning while in Higher Level Education:

My supervisor, Yvonne Crotty, set the assignment to create the slideshow. I experienced a degree of apprehension as the assignment seemed very broad and my past experience had been of much more restrictive and prescriptive assessment.

As an educator, I feel these traditional forms of assessment stifle real reflection, innovation and creativity. By incorporating a more formative diagnostic approach, I believe that more interaction is fostered thus benefiting student engagement and learning. My use of the assessment for learning approach enables students to take responsibility for their own learning and echoes Perkin's point that the process is just as important as the end product and has a positive impact on the learning experience. Over the course of the programme I try to ensure that the assessment process helps students to improve their learning. I make use of continuous/formative assessment in each module and this involves mini-assignments and one major assignment. I provide feedback to the students through Skype, face-to-face meetings or the feedback feature on Moodle's online journal at the end of each assignment and this allows me to help them improve in future assignments. I make the students aware of the purpose of each assignment, the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria so they can imagine the final goal and know the standard they are aiming to reach.

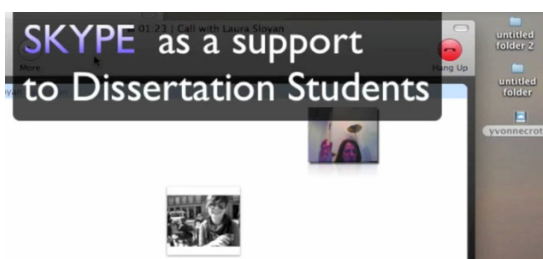
Emma also talks about trying to achieve a standard of excellence. This is fostered through the 'assessment for learning' approach (Elwood and Klenowski, 2002; Earl, 2003). In this approach students are involved in the assessments and come to a greater understanding of the subject matter through: (1) clear guidelines of standards required; (2) using feedback received and; (3) through participating in peer participation and validation meetings. The following excerpt from the article shows Emma's musing on the direction of one of her assignments as she is determined to achieve a high standard while recognising the gap between where she is now and where she wishes to be:

I was unhappy with the quality of the shot but I hoped that it could be improved by using proper lighting and the I Can Animate software.

Laura Sloyan: How can I use video to improve teacher engagement with my school's abundant ICT equipment?

As part of the ES512 Multimedia and Educational Innovation module in Year 1, Laura created a video with a number of students in the school celebrating the multi-cultural nature of her school. As a result of this positive experience with video she decided to continue the use of video in her Masters dissertation. Laura embarked on creating a video that modeled good practice in the use of ICT by teachers in the school that could be shared with all teachers in the school. She drew on the skills, knowledge and understanding of videography (pre-production, production and post-production)

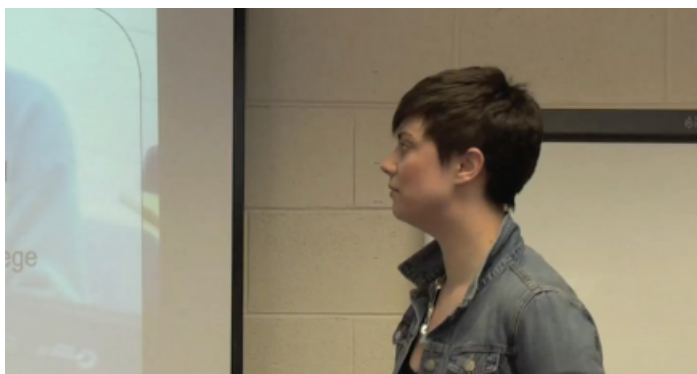
from the Masters programme. Throughout the dissertation process Laura had regular formal validation meetings with her peers and me as she presented her research in progress and received critical feedback. The use of technology to support the research process was an important factor in the development of Laura's thesis. We regularly met online through Skype and I used the screen sharing facility within Skype to view Laura's video work in progress and guide her to make suitable changes. These timely interventions helped with the development of Laura's video reaching a very high standard. I used the software screenflow to record one such online validation session.



Video 10. Using Technology to make the connection

Laura also drew on this collaborative approach to learning as she engaged with management, teachers and students in her school and this prompted her to shift the focus of the video from enhancing student engagement to enhancing teacher engagement in the use of ICT. In addition to using her newly acquired skills in videography to develop a video artefact she was also able to draw on the many technologies for learning that she encountered during the course of the Masters programme.

Technology can enhance the practice of teaching and Laura's video aims to demonstrate technologies that can improve the quality of pedagogy. However, it cannot be emphasised enough that it is not about the technology in isolation but about the pedagogy that underpins it. Like Laura, I advocate the use of technology to support learning yet I see technology as the tool in this process to enhance the interconnection. Its use should be avoided if it detracts from the learning process. Following on from Laura's final presentation of her research work, the production of a video demonstrates how I use this technology to enlighten students who are embarking on the research process.



Video 11. Laura's Final presentation and Validation meeting

Conclusion

The practical transformation in the embodied educational knowledge of practitioners in schools, universities and other workplaces directly relate to the e-Learning curriculum at Dublin City University. I have been enlightened in my own research through using my 'enlightened eye' (Eisner, 1997) to help my students develop their visual literacy skills.



Video 12 The Enlightened I Using My Enlightened Eye

I endeavour to live my values adopting a caring, creative, enjoyable, holistic and honest approach to my practice. I draw on both academic knowledge and my own experience. For academic knowledge to be useful, it must enlighten what 'I' have experienced and then I must provide explanations for what I am doing while building on existing theories. In doing this I am inspired by the words of Gandhi:

It's the action, not the fruit of the action that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)

The significance of this Special Issue can be understood in relation to the statement by Arnetha Ball (2011), President of the American Educational Research Association, when she says that the mission of AERA is, "to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good." She admits that whilst AERA has been successful in fulfilling the first part of its mission, it has been less successful in promoting, "the use of research to improve education and serve the public good." In order to serve the public good we should be producing accounts of our own influences and how we are living our values as fully as we can and in the way that the students on the M.Sc. in Education and Training Management programme at Dublin City University have demonstrated in this Special Issue.

The central focus of this Special Issue is to ensure that the students' voices and accounts are brought into the public domain.

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